



Joint Message from Agency Heads on the occasion of World Teachers' Day 2016

50th anniversary of the 1966 UNESCO/ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers

Valuing Teachers, improving their Status

5 October 2016

Every year on World Teachers Day we celebrate the limitless contributions made by teachers around the world. Day after day, year in and year out, these dedicated women and men guide and accompany students through the world of learning, helping them discover and fulfill their potential. In doing so, teachers not only help shape the individual futures of millions of children; they also help shape a better world for all.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development makes this critical connection between education and development. By adopting Sustainable Development Goal 4, world leaders pledged to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” This goal cannot be achieved unless we increase the supply of qualified teachers and empower them to be agents of educational change in the lives of the students they teach.

The situation is urgent. To achieve universal primary education by 2030, we need 24.4 million more teachers. The number is even greater for secondary education with 44.4 million secondary school teachers needed.

How can we recruit these new teachers and attract them to the vital profession of teaching when around the world, so many teachers are undertrained, underpaid and undervalued?

Many teachers still work with inadequate contracts and pay. They often live in difficult conditions, and lack appropriate initial training, continuous professional development, and consistent support. They are sometimes victims of discrimination and even violent attacks.

Teaching could be an attractive, first-choice profession – if teachers were valued commensurate with the immense value they provide to our children, and if their professional status as educators reflected the enormous impact their profession has on our shared future.

That means providing them with continuing training and development to support them in their critical role of educating all children, in all contexts – including the poorest, most remote communities, and in communities in crisis. It means compensating them properly and giving them the tools they need to do their indispensable jobs. It means putting in place policies that safeguard and reinforce the status of teachers – beginning by giving teachers a place at the table and an active role in decision-making that affects their work. And it means improving the efficiency and effectiveness of education systems at every level.

Fifty years ago today, these principles were laid down in the landmark *1966 UNESCO/ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers*, which resulted in the first international standard-setting instrument on teachers. Since that day, we have made tremendous progress in elevating the status of teachers – but far more work remains to be done.

We dedicate *World Teachers' Day 2016* to celebrating this milestone by reaffirming our commitment to the standards and aspirations it represents – and by redoubling our efforts to achieve them. The teachers of the world – and the children of the world – deserve nothing less.

Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO

Guy Ryder, Director-General, ILO

Anthony Lake, Executive Director, UNICEF

Helen Clark, Administrator, UNDP

Fred van Leeuwen, General Secretary, Education International